GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COAL
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:509
ANSWERED ON:28.08.2001
COMMITTEES ON FIRE ACCIDENTS IN COAL MINES
DUKHA BHAGAT

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a): whether any high level committees were constituted to check the incidents of fire in the coal mines;

(b): if so, the details thereof;

(c): whether these committees have submitted their reports;

(d): if so, the salient points thereof; and

(e): the details of those aspects of the reports which have not been implemented so far alongwith the reasons thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR COAL (SHRI SYED SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAIN)

(a) to (e): A statement is laid on the table of the House.

Statement referred to in parts (a) to (f) of the Lok Sabha Starred Question No. 509 for 28.08.2001 regarding Committees on Fire Accidents in Coal Mines.

(a) &(b): Various Committees appointed from time to time to identify the causes of fire and subsidence problem in coalfields have collected data regarding abandoned quarries, fire and subsided areas.

A High Level Committee was constituted by Government of India in December, 1996 with Secretary(Coal) as its Chairman and representatives of Ministry of Labour(DGMS),Planning Commission, Government of Bihar, Government of West Bengal and coal companies. The High Level Committeeduring its deliberation had taken into account the various recommendations made by earlier committees constituted since 1922 and made recommendations to the Government of India.

(c) & (d): The main recommendations of the 1996 committee are as under:-

(i) Wherever possible settlements of all unstable areas should be shifted to non coal bearing zones. For this purpose satellite townships are the best long term solution against subsidence hazards in the coalfields.

(ii) There should be a total ban on any new construction over declared unsafe areas in the coalfields. Govt. of Bihar should also enact a suitable legislation in line with the one already existing in West Bengal preventing construction over unsafe areas.

(iii) For tackling the problems of fire and subsidence both in Jharia Coalfields & Raniganj Coalfields, the participation and assistance from State Govt. and local administration is essential. Any enforcing agency mitigating measures against fire and subsidence in RCF and JCF should be adequately represented by the above authorities.

(iv) The mitigation measures against subsidence and fire hazards are very costly options and fruitful implementation of these measures can only be possible through separate executing agency who should be made responsible for formulating schemes, their implementation and management of funds. A broad outline of executing agencies has been evolved in consultation with the concerned State Govts., and the Govt. companies.

(v) The innovative hydro-pneumatic stowing technology currently being used at some locations in RCF has been found tobe very slow process. High pressure slurry pumping technology for underground void filling should be tried at some locations in BCCL for stabilising inaccessible unstable under ground workings.

(vi) Intensive stabilisation work of unstable areas under locations like Raniganj town from where populations cannot be shifted, should be carried out and persons affected in the high risk but low density areas may be relocated in a phased manner.

(vii) For arranging fund for the purpose of stablisation of subsidence prone areas and resettlement of affected people, the money could be made available either through plan expenditure as may be approved by Planning Commission or non plan expenditure from

Coal Conservation and Development Act fund after making suitable amendment.

(viii) Considering the urgency one scheme each by ECL and BCCL for shifting of the population from the unsafe areas may be taken up without waiting for the positioning of the institutional arrangement from plan funds available with Ministry of Coal.

(ix) The Interim Report submitted by BCCL and ECL jointly with State authorities on the fire and subsidence prone areas indicating likely affected population and financial implications should be kept in view while drawing priority wise schemes for immediate and effective way to deal with the problems.

(e): After the formation of new state, Government of Jharkhand have constituted a Sub Authority on 2-8-2001. Demonstration scheme in respect of BCCL and ECL was sanctioned by the Government. There is no progress in respect of ECL due to unwillingness and non-cooperation of affected people. The Government of West Bengal has not yet constituted a Sub Authority. Progress in respect of BCCL is partial.